

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 06037

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT EG CY  
SUBJECT: PLO/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS: DOWNWARD TREND CON-  
- TINUES

REF: CAIRO 5870 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ABU IYAD'S PRAISE FOR CYPRIOTS KILLING EGYPTIAN  
SOLDIERS HEADLINED, ALONG WITH PLO'S DENIAL OF INVOLVE-  
MENT IN INCIDENT. PAPERS POINT ACCUSING FINGER AT PLO  
ON SIBAI'S ASSASSINATION. HOSTAGES REPORT KILLERS SEEMED  
WELL ACQUAINTED WITH ABU MAYZAR, OTHER PLO LEADERS.  
DESPITE THIS, GOE HEDGING BETS ON FUTURE PLO ROLE.

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1. ABU IYAD. AKHBAR, FEB 24, BANNER HEADLINED ABU  
IYAD'S PRAISE FOR CYPRIOT ASSAULT ON EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS,  
CLAIMING ARAFAT'S AIDE LAUDED KYPRIANOU DECISION "SHOOT  
EGYPTIANS IN THE BACK." (COMMENT: STATEMENT WILL FURTHER  
CONVINCE SADAT THAT ABU IYAD RESPONSIBLE FOR SIBAI ASSAS-  
SINATION.)

2. PLO DENIAL. ABOVE STATEMENT JUXTAPOSED TO DEPUTY HEAD PLO POLITICAL DEPARTMENT SAYID KEMAL'S ASSERTION THAT REPORTS OF PLO PARTICIPATION IN LARNACA ASSAULT UNFOUNDED. KEMAL CLAIMED HAVE THIS DIRECTLY FROM ARAFAT BY PHONE. PAPERS UNCONVINCED. PRESS RIDICULED KEMAL'S REQUEST TOR KYPRIANOU TURN "TWO GUNMEN" OVER TO PLO FOR TRIAL.

3. RESPONSIBILITY. EDITORIALY, AHRAM POINTED TO RECKLESS THREATS MADE BY "RESPONSIBLE PALESTINIAN LEADERS", PRIOR TO SIBAI'S ASSASSINATION, AGAINST ALL WHO ACCOMPANIED SADAT TO JERUSALEM AS HAVING GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO "EXTREMIST AND MAVERICK ELEMENTS" COMMIT FOOLISH CRIME. AKHBAR BOARD CHAIRMAN MOUSSA SABRI PURSUED SAME LINE, NOTING PLO COMMAND HAD TERMED SADAT "TRAITOR", WHILE ARAFAT JOINED HABASH AND OTHERS IN TRIPOLI SUMMIT ACCUSING SADAT OF TREASON. FURTHER, ABU IYAD "DEMANDED SADAT'S HEAD AND HEADS OF ALL BACKING HIM," DECLARING ONE BULLET WOULD WIPE OUT EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE. EARLIER, SABRI NOTED, PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS PUBLISHED POSTER CONTAINING PHOTOS OF EGYPTIAN EDITORS ON JERUSALEM TRIP WITH LEGEND: "WANTED--DEAD OR ALIVE." FINALLY, SABRI QUOTED ARAFAT MESSAGE TO WORLD ORGANIZATIONS, DENYING EGYPT ANY RIGHT SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS, QUESTIONING HOW PLO CAN,NOW, CLAIM EGYPT SEEKING ABSOLVE ITSELF OF PALESTINIAN BURDEN?  
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4. HOSTAGES. JOURNALIST, WHO INTERVIEWED EGYPTIAN HOSTAGES FROM HIJACKED AIRPLANE, QUOTED THEM AS SAYING KILLERS APPEARED TO BE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH PLO LEADERS ON BOARD, PARTICULARLY ABU MAYZAR--WITH WHOM THEY PLAYED CARDS BETWEEN STOPS. ASSASSINS REPORTEDLY TURNED DOWN DAMASCUS BECAUSE ONE UNDER SYRIAN "DEATH SENTENCE" FOR PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES. FINALLY, HOSTAGES GAVE IMPRESSION THROUGHOUT INCIDENT OF EXTREME CONFIDENCE THINGS WOULD TURN OUT WELL, THEY WOULD ESCAPE PUNISHMENT. DEMEANOR DID NOT CHANGE UNTIL BULLETS STARTED FLYING AROUND LARNACA AIRPORT.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE ABOVE, LEVEL OF VITRIOL IN FEB 24 COMMENT DECREASED. WHILE ACCUSING PLO OF ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIBAI'S MURDER, EGYPTIAN PRESS HEDGING BETS BY MOOTING POSSIBILITY ORGANIZATION BEING USED BY "OTHERS." USUALLY WELL-INFORMED JOURNALISTS ARE PEDDLING LINE THAT EGYPT CAN NEVER SEVER ITS RELATIONS WITH PLO:"SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." HOW LONG THIS WILL HOLD, IF DUO JAILED IN NICOSIA TURN OUT BE MEMBERS OF IDENTIFIABLE PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION,

REMAINS TO BE SEEN. ELTS

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## Message Attributes

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